Politeness in BELF Communication:

A Study on Directness Strategies and Formality in Professional E-mail Communication

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Abstract

This paper investigates communication between speakers with different first languages in a business setting, referred to as BELF, *Business English as a lingua franca*. The present paper investigates politeness strategies in BELF e-mail correspondence, and the interplay between them. Politeness strategies play an important role in e-mail correspondence, and this has been identified through studying formality in greetings and closings, and directness in requests. The dataset consists of 46 naturally-occurring e-mails, which have been grouped into internal or external correspondence to accordingly answer the research question, which aims to investigate whether or not there is a difference in the communicative approach depending on who the receiver is. This has been analysed in terms of the politeness strategies formality and directness, and the results show that the internal and external correspondence are very similar to each other, hence the level of formality and directness rather appears to depend on the sender him/herself. The results furthermore present that greetings are mainly informal, closings mainly formal and requests predominantly direct, for both internal and external correspondence. This would conventionally indicate that the e-mails are impolite; however, in accordance with some recent scholars it has been agreed that, along with the development of e-mails, the requirements for politeness have changed, and the e-mails in the present study are primarily considered polite.

Keywords

BELF; E-mail communication; Politeness; Formality; Directness; Greetings; Closings; Requests.
1. Introduction

English is increasingly being used as a lingua franca in many domains, e.g. academia (e.g. Björkman, 2011; Mauranen, 2006) and business (e.g. Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010). In communicative situations where English is chosen as a means of communication among participants with other first languages, English is used as a lingua franca (ELF) (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2005). The usage of ELF has increased during the last two decades, a development that is highly current in the Nordic countries where English has become an important language for such communication (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). Many companies in Nordic and Scandinavian countries have previously often used Scandinavian, which is a mixture between Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian and Icelandic (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). However, many companies consider it to be problematic using Scandinavian, and additionally, to become increasingly international they need to communicate through a lingua franca, e.g. ELF, which is often the reason companies change their official corporate language to English (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005).

So far, research on ELF has focused predominantly on describing ELF communication, and describing its communicative effectiveness. Some researchers have also tried to define ELF and its participants, and so far, ELF has mainly been referred to as being English used solely by, and among NNS (e.g. Firth, 1990). As they are NNS, none of the participants owns the language, and ELF is referred to as a shared communication code with users of English rather than learners of it (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). Further research on ELF has also been conducted on the topic of misunderstandings, and to what extent they may or may not occur (e.g. Björkman, 2011; Kaur, 2009 and 2011; Mauranen, 2006; Pitzl, 2005). The work on ELF started in the area of pragmatics, mainly on how NNS communicate efficiently and successfully with each other (e.g. Mauranen, 2006). The effectiveness has been presented to depend on the participants’ ability to focus on pragmatic strategies rather than grammatical accuracy (e.g. Björkman, 2011, 2013 and 2014; Kaur, 2009 and 2011; Mauranen, 2006). Research on ELF has also focused on phonology (e.g. Jenkins, 2000) and lexicogrammar (e.g. Björkman, 2010; and 2014; Ranta, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2004).

When ELF is used in international business settings among business professionals, i.e. at a workplace or among colleagues or business partners etc., it is defined as BELF (Business English as a lingua franca) (Kankaanranta & Louhila-Salminen, 2010). BELF is used among NNS who use English for one specific purpose, which is getting the work done (Kankaanranta, 2005). Similar to ELF, BELF is a natural and shared communication code and the speakers are accordingly users, and not learners of English (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). An important part of BELF and workplace communication is e-mails, which has been the focus in several studies within BELF (e.g. Jensen, 2009; Kankaanranta, 2005; Kankaanranta & Louhila-Salminen, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005)
Previous research on BELF in e-mail communication has stated that some of the prioritised areas have been to investigate strategies that ensure successful BELF e-mail communication (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). It has also been stated that the norms of e-mails have not yet been settled to the same extent as for other written business communication, and therefore it is relevant to further study politeness in e-mails through the strategies (in)formality and (in)directness. The area of BELF e-mails is furthermore under-researched in the perspective of politeness, and usage of politeness strategies within e-mail correspondence between business partners. To be able to determine a potential difference in internal and external e-mail communication at the workplace, the aim of the current study is to build on previous research to extend knowledge on BELF and e-mail correspondence.

The present study has investigated e-mail communication in a BELF setting, with the dataset from a Nordic provider of payments and card solutions. The study has focused on the level of politeness in terms of formality and directness by looking at three specific units: greetings, closings and requests. Specifically, the current paper will focus on whether the employees within this company are more likely to choose formal greetings and closings when communicating externally, than internally, and how the requests are formulated in the internal versus external correspondence.

2. Background

2.1 BELF

English currently functions as the dominant lingua franca for international business (BELF) and is used between participants who do not share native language (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). The aim of BELF is to communicate an aim, and to get work done, such as convincing a partner/customer to buy a service or product (Kankaanranta, 2005; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). Research has shown that a successful strategy for convincing and keeping customers is by showing them politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Louhiala-Salminen & Charles, 2006), but research on what strategies are most polite is showing us varying results. The following sections will review previous research on the topic.

Research on BELF has been conducted on both spoken and written communication, where some of the spoken research has aimed to investigate how international work-related interaction was constructed and what surrounding areas that could occur, by using conversation analysis (CA) (e.g. Charles, 2007; Firth, 1996). Another study using CA aimed to show the main difficulties in using a second or third language (English or Swedish) in business communication, where the results showed that communication is easier if the chosen language is none of the participants’ first language, since it leaves inequality and an advantage for those whose first language is used (Charles, 2007). Whenever English is used for communication, it has been proved that NNS are able to
adapt and simplify their language use if the proficiency level of a participant is weaker than their own, whereas a NS cannot adapt to the same extent (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). The spoken area of BELF has through observations from meetings and recordings of telephone conferences investigated the role of English, and its importance in business settings (Ehrenreich, 2010). The results show that it is generally considered to be the language of communication in international business (e.g. Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Rogerson-Revell, 2007 and 2008).

Most research on written BELF communication has, so far, focused on e-mail correspondence and advertising texts (e.g. Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009; Kankaanranta, 2005; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). Methods that are used for such research are, e.g. corpus analysis (e.g. Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009; Kankaanranta, 2005), combined with genre analysis or discourse analysis (e.g. Kankaanranta, 2005; Louhiala-Salminen, 1995). Kankaanranta (2005) conducted a case study at a multilingual company with participants from Sweden and Finland, who recently changed their corporate language from Swedish to English, and therefore uses BELF in their e-mail correspondence. The aim of the study was to find out whether or not BELF e-mail communication between the Finnish and Swedish participants was efficient. She also investigated how greetings and closings were formulated in the e-mails, and to what purpose. The results stressed the importance of the circumstances being equal for all participants, i.e. none of them using their native language (Kankaanranta, 2005). These results are also found in Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005), who did a research on the written discourse produced by Swedish and Finnish colleagues, and studied potential differences in directness. Through questionnaires and interviews it was found that the Finnish employees wrote more direct e-mails than the Swedes, concluding that different approaches may be considered due to cultural differences or simply even personal differences or preferences (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005).

2.2 Politeness and BELF

Work on politeness started much earlier than work on BELF, which is why it is necessary to look beyond BELF research for key studies on politeness. The most influential work on politeness and politeness theory so far has been carried out by Brown and Levinson (1987) and is based on Erving Goffman’s (1955) concept of face. The concept of face describes a self-image that one aims to protect. The expression includes positive and negative face, the first referring to a self-image that needs to be appreciated and approved by others than yourself, whereas the latter stresses the importance of a territory of your own, where one have the right to no distraction, one have the right to freedom. If a person threatens either the positive or negative face, they convey a face-threatening act (FTA), such as insulting someone (positive face) or ordering someone to do something (negative face). Brown and Levinson (1987) say that it is inevitable to avoid FTAs for both speaker and hearer at all times, due to that one of them often acts in opposition to one’s own, or the other’s expectations and desires. However, politeness is fundamentally about if an action or utterance is polite or rude, which are two concepts that can be perceived differently depending on culture (Brown & Levinson, 1987).
Through the cultural approach, politeness is also closely connected to BELF, as participants may come from different countries with varying cultural backgrounds, which can be the cause for issues and misunderstandings in BELF communication (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). Louhiala-Salminen and Charles (2006) have found that Finnish BELF users are more direct and straightforward than Swedish BELF users in spoken communication, whereas Swedes would rather focus on clarifying their utterances. On the other hand, in written communication there was roughly no difference between the two (Louhiala-Salminen & Charles, 2006). Apart from directness, formality is also connected to the concept of politeness, hence they both enable respectable and effective communication. Communicative situations that are direct and informal are often perceived as impolite (Kankaanranta, 2005; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Pullin, 2013).

### 2.3 Politeness in e-mails

The presence or absence of politeness in written discourse can be identified by several characteristics, e.g. directness and formality. These characteristics can moreover be identified by studying requests (see e.g. Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Blum-Kulka, 1987; Félix-Brasdefer, 2012; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Lorenzo-Dus & Bou-Franch, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005) or greetings and closings (see e.g. Bou-Franch, 2011; Crystal, 2001; Waldvogel, 2007). Requests and opening and closing sequences are connected to politeness because of their close relation to the FTAs. When someone is conveying a request, they are threatening the other person’s face, and the level of directness will indicate the sender’s awareness of face and to what extent this person has made an effort in minimising the FTA in their request, or saving the other person’s face (Blum-Kulka, 1987). However, using informal greetings or closings, such as excluding one of them, may come across as rude or impolite (Félix-Brasdefer, 2012).

Greetings are introductory sequences of a conversation, used through a greeting word such as ‘dear’ or ‘hi’, or solely by using a person’s name. Alternatively, these two can be combined, but greetings are not necessarily required in a conversation. Closings are sequences used to end a conversation (Waldvogel, 2007). Formal e-mails are highly comparable with formal letters in terms of using the same or similar closings. Examples of informal closings in written correspondence are ‘see you soon’ or ‘cheers’, whereas formal closings include ‘best regards’, ‘yours sincerely’ etc. There have been some difficulties in determining whether ‘regards’ is a formal or informal closing, but recent evidence suggests that it should be categorised as a formal closing (Bjørge, 2007). Similarly, there have been difficulties determining whether ‘thanks’ should be categorised to be an informal closing, or an illocutionary act expressing appreciation towards someone. Whenever ‘thanks’ is used as a farewell formula, it will be categorised as an informal closing (Waldvogel, 2007).

So far, research on politeness and requests has mainly been conducted on students (e.g. Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Chejnová, 2014; Félix-Brasdefer, 2012; Lorenzo-Dus & Bou-Franch, 2013), however, there are also a few studies within business (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1987; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). Requests
written in English are generally formulated indirectly (Chejnová, 2014). To be able to determine which sequences are most polite, the requests have been grouped into direct, conventionally indirect or indirect categories (Blum-Kulka, 1987). The strategy that has been mentioned to be least connected to politeness is the direct requests, meaning that politeness is most closely related to indirectness (e.g. Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Blum-Kulka, 1987). However, this does not mean that there always is interplay between indirectness and politeness, although it is often the case. Indirect sequences are often perceived as more polite because they provide the hearer/reader with more options (Blum-Kulka, 1987). E-mail communication can also be efficient and quick, but it also allows the writer to think before sending, which can create more polite messages than spoken communication (Félix-Brasdefer, 2012). The use of politeness in e-mail correspondence is accordingly not decreasing, but it is rather going through a change in terms of politeness strategies, and therefore there have been difficulties in identifying these strategies. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the sender has lost their respect towards their authorities, just that the communicative rules regarding politeness in e-mails have changed (Chejnová, 2014).

Moreover, research on formality has suggested that business e-mails are informal, whereas student-teacher correspondence is under development and will result in either becoming more like speech (less formal), or it can become less like speech (more formal) (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Bjørge, 2007). The level of formality is attributed to both power distance and culture, and they may have influence on the opening and closing sequences when the participants have different roles within the company, and it can create inequality in the messages (Bjørge, 2007). Waldvogel (2007) on the other hand, means that presence of opening and closing sequences not necessarily equals polite behaviour. Instead, it is suggested that usage of greetings and closings are dependent on the general norm within the current companies (Waldvogel, 2007), whereas Kankaanranta (2005) proposes that the presence of greetings and closings simply shows involvement (Kankaanranta, 2005). Greetings and closings generally occur in the majority of e-mail messages (Kankaanranta, 2005; Waldvogel, 2007) and whenever they do not occur, it is most often in quick and short responses where a second interactional greeting or closing would appear to be inappropriate (Crystal, 2001).

Although BELF e-mail communication has been researched on to some extent, there is need for more research, focusing especially on politeness strategies. The present paper will aim to extend knowledge on BELF together with the politeness strategies directness and formality, and will examine e-mail correspondence at a Scandinavian company. The company’s official corporate language is English, but as none of the participants are native speakers of it, they are all communicating within a BELF setting. The paper will also aim to indicate the difference in preferences for opening and closing sequences, i.e. investigate if the level of formality is changed depending on whether the correspondence was internal or external (to a colleague or customer). Similarly, it will investigate request sequences to determine if there is a direct or indirect approach. The present paper will seek the answers to the following research questions:
1. Are the employees within this company more likely to choose formal *greetings* and *closings* when communicating externally, than internally?
2. How are the *requests* formulated in the internal versus external correspondence? Are they mainly using direct or indirect strategies when communicating *requests*?

## 3. Method and material

### 3.1 Method

The present study has been conducted using only authentic material from the company in question, since (B)ELF is connected to real-life usage (Kankaanranta, 2005; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). For the study, qualitative and quantitative methods have been combined to study the certain *greetings*, *closings* and *requests* including frequency counts to be able to get a deeper and more descriptive analysis. The data has been collected with the help of a contact person, who provided the researcher with e-mails from his/her workplace mailbox (see examples of e-mails in Appendices B and C). Those who were participating in the e-mail correspondences were thereafter contacted. They all agreed to contribute to the present research project by signing a consent form providing them with brief information on the project and their rights to withdraw at any stage (see Appendix A). The e-mails were analysed to identify politeness in terms of *directness* and *formality*. Attention was paid to analyse several sections of the e-mails, and therefore the introduction, main body and ending were chosen, i.e. *greetings*, *requests* and *closings*. *Greetings* and *closings* were analysed by counting and grouping them into categories depending on their level of *formality* (Bjørge, 2007) and *directness* (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Lorenzo-Dus & Bou-Franch, 2013). For the categorisation of formal/informal *greetings* and *closings* for the analysis, Bjørge’s (2007) categorisation has been used. Table 1 presents the categorisation of *greetings*, and Table 2 presents the categorisation of *closings*.

### Table 1. The categorisation of *greetings* (Bjørge, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal greetings (examples)</th>
<th>Informal greetings (examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dear + Professor/Madam and/or first- and surname</td>
<td>Dear + First name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Mrs/Ms + First- and surname</td>
<td>Hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear + First- and surname</td>
<td>No greeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. The categorisation of *closings* in the study (Bjørge, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal closings (examples)</th>
<th>Informal closings (examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yours sincerely</td>
<td>Best wishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best regards</td>
<td>See you…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regards</td>
<td>No closing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *requests* in the correspondence have been analysed through following Blum-Kulka’s (1987) categorisation of *requests* (see Table 3 below). The categorisation displays *requests* strategies presented in order of their level of *directness* with the most
direct strategies first, finishing with the least direct strategy (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Lorenzo-Dus & Bou-Franch, 2013).

Table 3. The categorisation of request strategies in the study (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Lorenzo-Dus & Bou-Franch, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Derivable (MD)</td>
<td>The verbal mood determines the request The verbal mood determines the request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want Statement (WS)</td>
<td>The speaker’s wish of the receiver doing the requested act is expressed The speaker’s wish of the receiver doing the requested act is expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would appreciate if you could look through the suggestions/clarifications below, and give an OK or to suggest changes if not OK</td>
<td>I would appreciate if you could look through the suggestions/clarifications below, and give an OK or to suggest changes if not OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventionally indirect strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query Preparatory (QP)</td>
<td>Refer to the surrounding conditions of requests (ability, willingness etc.) Refer to the surrounding conditions of requests (ability, willingness etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you explain the change in the committed service level</td>
<td>Could you explain the change in the committed service level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Hints (MH)</td>
<td>Refers indirectly to a request, and they are often interpreted as request due to the context Refers indirectly to a request, and they are often interpreted as request due to the context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wonder if you are able to help me with a demo for the prospect in the end of January</td>
<td>I wonder if you are able to help me with a demo for the prospect in the end of January</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along with grouping the requests within these categories, they have also been separated in terms of internal and external communication, to be able to analyse a potential difference between them.

3.2 Material

E-mail communication has become the most important means of communication, and it is moreover replacing all other written communication at the workplace (Lannon & Gurak, 2010; Waldvogel, 2007). It is an efficient tool to use along with the increasing globalised business, since it is possible to address one or several people at the same time, regardless of which country or time zone they are currently in. It is also useful as the record can be saved, which enables one to go back for important information in old conversations (Waldvogel, 2007).

The data for the current study is naturally-occurring e-mail correspondence at a Nordic payment company operating within Europe. The company in this research provides payments and card solutions within parts of Europe. Their primary target partners and customers are banks and retailers. They improve and provide secure transactions between point A and point B, i.e. from purchasing customer to the selling store, and the money is transferred from the customer’s bank, to the store’s bank.

The company is Nordic, but their official language is English. In some cases, ‘Scandinavian’ or the participants’ native language is used when all participants are from countries within Scandinavia. However, the usage of ‘Scandinavian’ within the company has been reported to cause communicative problems before, which is why
they are increasingly using English in all correspondence within the company. The employees estimate their own usage of English to be between 50-80%, depending on how much they work with international contacts and colleagues. This, however, is a self-report, which has not been followed up by formal interviews with the participants. The participants are all NNS of English, hence they are all using BELF.

46 e-mails were collected from employees within the company sent between January 2013 and March 2014. Out of these 46 e-mails, 28 are internal e-mails sent between four colleagues within the company, and 18 external e-mails that are sent between one employee and one partner/customer. Attention was paid to achieving an even distribution as much as possible between internal and external e-mail conversation. Apart from a few e-mails that were written in Swedish and therefore excluded from the study, all the material that was originally collected is used. There are a total of five informants in the study. It should be noted that this might not be a large enough number to be representative of the whole company. However, this number has been appropriate for the present description, considering the scope of the present study.

3.3 Participants

The participants who communicate internally within the current company, i.e. Lucas, Sam, Jenny and Pamela have all worked together in different projects for at least 6 months, i.e. since Pamela was employed. Lucas, Sam and Jenny have been communicating with each other for approximately 2-3 years. Externally, i.e. communication between Lucas and Malcolm has been active for 3.5 years, when the organisations started to develop a relationship and became partners. Accordingly, all participants have communicated with each other before. This has been taken into account when interpreting the results. The participants have been anonymized and given a fictional name, ‘pseudonym’ (see Table 4).

Table 4. Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Mother tongue</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Country they currently work in</th>
<th>Lived in English speaking country?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Senior Manager, Business Expansion</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Senior Manager, Business Solutions</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>Senior Product Manager, Cards</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Key Account Manager, Sales Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>Head of Supplier Relations, Cards</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4 shows, there is a relatively equal distribution of male and female informants in the study. Similarly, there is equal distribution of representatives from each country.
where the company’s main markets are: Sweden, Finland and Norway. The informants’ age range varies between 35 and 60 years old, and the participants represent different organizational positions: senior manager, senior product manager, key account manager and head of supplier relations. Another point they have in common is that none of the informants have lived in an English speaking country for an extended period.

4. Results

The following section will present the results from the study. The aim of the study has been to investigate if, and how the level of formality and directness in e-mail correspondence changes depending on if the receiver is a customer or a colleague. The research questions were formulated as follows:

1. Are the employees within this company more likely to choose formal greetings and closings when communicating externally, than internally?
2. How are the requests formulated in the internal versus external e-mail correspondence? Are they mainly using direct or indirect strategies when communicating requests?

The initial move for the study was to gather opening and closing sequences, as well as requests, from the collected e-mail conversations. Tables 1 and 2 (see section 3.1) show all the instances of greetings and closings and whether they are formal or informal sequences (following Bjørge, 2007), and thereafter also grouped into internal or external categories depending on who the sender is. In Tables 5 and 6 (see section 4.1 and 4.2), the results on greetings and closings are presented. The results section will also present the occurrences of requests within the e-mails, which have been gathered and grouped into categories that are determined depending on their level of directness and formality (greetings/closings). See Table 7 for the results on requests (section 4.3).

4.1 Greetings

Table 5. Results on greetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greetings</th>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal greetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal greetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No greeting</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>25/28</td>
<td>89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear + first name</td>
<td>0/28</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 5 shows, all internal and external greetings were informally written, i.e. there were no occurrences of formal greetings in the dataset. The internal conversations present 28 messages of which the majority included a greeting of some sort, as only three of them (11%) started without, as seen in Examples 1, 2 and 3. E-mails with sequences including *hi* were the most favoured greeting in both the internal (89%) and external (44%) communication (see Example 4), and sequences including ‘*dear + first
name’ were not used at any time in the internal communication, whereas it was the second most preferred greeting in the external communication (33%) (see Example 5). As mentioned, 11% of the internal e-mails, and 22% of the external e-mails started without a greeting sequence. All the e-mails that did not include a greeting sequence could be categorised as a follow-up/response e-mail (see Example 1), clarification (see Example 2) or a summarising e-mail (from a meeting or telephone call etc.) (see Example 3). Waldvogel (2007) emphasises that in messages that are not introductory e-mails, a greeting could be seen as not having an effect, and for that reason they should not be used. Messages that lack greetings are furthermore usually quick and short responses seen as an interaction where a second introductory greeting would appear to be inappropriate (Crystal, 2001).

Throughout the results section, the instance that is currently discussed is written in bold.

**Example 1. Response e-mail with no greeting sequence (Internal correspondence)**

| From: Lucas                      |
| Subject: Regarding customer demo in Copenhagen – January |
| Sorry, but a power demo is not sufficient in this case. |
| Best regards                    |

**Example 2. Clarification e-mail with no greeting sequence (External correspondence)**

| From: Malcolm                     |
| Subject: Projectplan – Monday morning delivery |
| **As this obviously needs to be clarified:** |
| We have been promised a complete Project Plan (Appendix 2) for (Company) to start review by 10 CET Monday morning. Please deliver accordingly. |
| Med vennlig hilsen/Best regards   |

**Example 3. Summarizing e-mail with no greeting sequence (External correspondence)**

| From: Malcolm                     |
| Subject: Todays meeting – confcall |
| **Summary of today’s meeting** between Michael Svensson, Lucas Andersson – (Company) and The undersigned: […] |
| (No closing sequence)             |

**Example 4. Informal greeting including hi (Internal correspondence)**

| From: Lucas                        |
| Subject: Regarding customer demo in Copenhagen – January |
| **Hi Sam** |
| Sorry to push you, but have you found anyone that can assist with the demo for (Company) yet? |
Once you have that person for us, we need to set up a video- or conf call to agree what should be presented on the 24th. Feel free to call me at any time to discuss.

Best Regards

Example 5. Informal greeting including dear + name (External correspondence)

From: Malcolm
Subject: (Company) service order

Dear Lucas!
I can confirm the receipt of the documents, and that we will accept the final documents to be provided tomorrow morning.

Med vennlig hilsen/best regards
Malcolm

The external communication presents 18 workplace e-mails between two participants, Lucas and Malcolm. In these conversations, similarly to the internal communication, there were no occurrences of formal greetings. However, in contrast to the internal conversations, the distribution of greetings is more equally spread in these e-mails. The external greetings are distributed 22%, 33% and 44% among the informal greetings, whereas the internal greetings are distributed 89%, 11%. Accordingly, the external greetings have no extreme majority leaning towards one specific greeting, as for what is seen among the internal (hi, 89%).

The above-mentioned examples provide naturally-occurring examples of greeting sequences. Examples 1, 2 and 3 are three different instances of sequences where the sender did not use a greeting. Example 4 is an example of the most favoured greeting, ‘hi’. Example 5 shows the instance of ‘dear + first name’, which was used several times externally, but never internally.

4.2 Closings

Table 6. Results on closings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closings</th>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal closings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best regards²</td>
<td>25/28</td>
<td>89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal closings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name³</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks + first name</td>
<td>0/28</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No closing</td>
<td>0/28</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in the following section show examples of closing sequences from the e-mail conversations, and the numbers are presented in Table 6. The results show that the preferred form of closings was very similar in both the internal and external conversations. In the internal communication, 89% of the closing moves included
sequences of the formal closing ‘best regards’ (see Example 6). The share of the same formal closing in the external communication is 83%, followed by ‘no closing’ (11%)(see Example 7). The internal conversations presented a contrasting result for this sequence, as there were no occurrences of ‘no closings’. Additionally, there were very few occurrences of informal closings, only three in both internal and external communication (11%; 17%). The second most favoured closing in the internal communication included only the name of the sender (11%)(see Example 8), which did not occur in the external communication. The sole closing sequence in the external communication that only occurred at one time was ‘thanks + first name’ (6%). As mentioned, ‘thanks’ do not necessarily need to be categorised as a closing sequence, although it is in this setting (see Example 9).

Example 6. Formal closing including best regards (External correspondence)

From: Malcolm
Projectplan – Monday morning delivery

Hi!
Your summary is in accordance with our understanding with the addition as I have stated below

Med vennlig hilsen / Best regards

Example 7. Informal sequence, no closing (External correspondence)

From: Malcolm
Subject: Todays meeting – confcall

Summary of today’s meeting between Michael Svensson, Lucas Andersson – (Company) and The undersigned:
[...] Other actions:
– Negotiation meeting later today (Friday). Purpose is to close remaining contractual issues. Malcolm to propose time.
– Meeting between Anders Andersson ((Company)) and Michael Svensson ((Company)) to be scheduled either later today (Friday) or Monday the 27th. Michael to provide available hours to Malcolm who will coordinate.

Subject:
– Delay and consequences for the project
– Financial consequences
– Project control and management

Malcolm to provide contact data for Anders Andersson to Michael (In a separate mail)

Example 8. Informal closing including only the sender’s name (Internal correspondence)

From: Sam
Subject: Demo (Company)
Yes,
Let’s have a short session tomorrow.

Sam
Example 9. Informal closing including *thanks + first name* (External correspondence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From: Lucas</th>
<th>Subject: Extension of deadline for provision of project plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hi Anne*,</td>
<td>See mail from Malcolm below, as you can see he insist on having the extra day also in this extension even if we have agreed to target for being ready this Thursday (tried to convince him). Can you assist me in adding that line notification date should then be July 8th 17:00 CET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks/</td>
<td>Lucas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The communicative moves were in general quite similarly distributed as both the internal and external communication presents over 80% of formal *closings*, indicating that *closings* sequences at this company generally are much more formal than the opening sequences, as they only presented informal sequences. However, the use of openings and *closings* appears to be rather personalised, as most participants tend to mainly use the same openings and *closings* when e-mailing, see e.g. the gathered *closings* used by Lucas (participating in both internal and external communication). The results showed that Lucas used 17 *closings*, whereof 15 sequences include only ‘best regards’ (88%). The other two sequences are one ‘no closing’ (6%) and one with ‘thanks + name’ (6%). Furthermore, out of all sequences including ‘best regards’, Lucas contributed with 38% of them.

The above-mentioned examples provide naturally-occurring sequences of *closings* from the e-mails. Example 6 above shows a typical incidence with ‘best regards’, where the Norwegian author has also written the Norwegian equivalent for best regards (Med vennlig hilsen). Example 7 is a case where the *closing* sequence has been excluded, and Example 8 is an incidence where only the name of the sender has been added as a sign-off. Example 9 shows an instance where ‘Thanks’ is used as a farewell formula.

### 4.3 Requests

Below, in Table 7, all *requests* are gathered and categorised in accordance with Blum-Kulka’s model (1987).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive category</th>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Derivable (MD)</td>
<td>4/13</td>
<td>31 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want Statement (WS)</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>23 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally indirect strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Anne is not one of the participants for this study, but this e-mail sent to her has been included as it is sent from one of the participants. For the purposes of this essay, however, her response was not included.
The dataset consists of 46 e-mails, 20 of which contain request sequences. They have been categorised into direct, conventionally indirect and indirect strategies (see Table 2 for definitions of the strategies, section 3.1; Table 6 for the results, section 4) and similarly to the opening and closing sequences they are also separated in terms of whether the e-mails contained internal or external conversations. The ratings for directness, as seen in Table 7, presents that mood derivables are the most direct and mild hints the least direct strategies (Blum-Kulka, 1987). There is no large variation between the strategies, and the distribution is fairly equal. The form of requests that is preferred within this data is mood derivable (31%) and mild hints (31 %), i.e. the most direct, and the most indirect strategy (see Examples 10 and 11 below). They are followed by another direct strategy, namely want statement (23%), and thereafter also query preparatory (15%) which is a conventionally indirect strategy.

**Example 10. Mood derivable (Internal correspondence)**

From: Lucas  
Subject: (Company) Schedule 4B

Hi  
**Please assist in reviewing and confirming our suggested wording in Schedule 4B.** We need to come back to (Company) during the day today or latest Tuesday to be able to close the contract.

The suggested service labels below has been set based on earlier discussions and suggestions. We are unsure if these are correct.

- Financial authorizations (response time)
- Cardholder and account maintenance (response time)
- Client interface (response time)

The changes are marked with track changes.

**Anne, please take a close look at clause 10 – material breach.** We have tried to rephrase to meet (Company's) requests but still securing our business.

Best regards

**Example 11. Mood derivable (External correspondence)**

From: Malcolm  
Subject: Project plan – Monday morning delivery

Malcolm  
Short summary from our call this morning.

1. (Company) to send status of each section of the Appendix 2. (Project Plan) by the end of play today.
2. (Company) to send Gerard a “snapshot” of how the Monday morning delivery will look
like by end of play today. This for showing on which level the resource estimates and appurtenant deliverables will be made.

Further plan is:
At 13:00 CET Monday I will send you a mail confirming when we deliver:

– Appendix 1 Project definition (Scope document)
– Complete Appendix 2 Project Plan
– Revised Appendix 4 Governance (Based on the version commented by (Company)

Please confirm that we are on the same page here – Thanks!

Best regards,
Lucas

Example 12. Mild hint (Internal correspondence)

From: Sam
Subject: Regarding customer demo in Copenhagen – January

Hi Lucas,
Tom Andersson from my team would be willing to give demo for the bank.
I had a discussion with Tom and he would like to get requirements related to demo from you?

Br,
Sam

Example 13. Mild hint (Internal correspondence)

From: Sam
Subject: Regarding customer demo in Copenhagen – January

Hi,
About this demo request, could it be possible to Jenny to come and demo the XXX? Jenny had already an idea how it could be shown with the thick client. Jenny do you have time or are you full up work with (Company)?

Example 10 provides two instances of the most direct requests in the study (mood derivable), introduced politely by using ‘please’, but thereafter the utterance is moreover a straightforward request. Example 11 shows another instance of a mood derivable that seeks confirmation of equal understanding. Example 12 is a ‘mild hint’, which is more vague and not as forthright as the mood derivables. In this case, the message shows an indirect statement ending with a question mark, to clarify an answer is required. Similarly, Example 13 presents another mild hint that indirectly asks the receiver (Jenny) if she has time to take on to do a demo for a customer.

The requests within the external conversations are quite similar, but not entirely. The most favoured strategies are mood derivable (43%) and query preparatory (43%) (see Examples 15 and 16 below) followed by want statement (14%) (see Example 14 below). There were no occurrences of mild hints in the external e-mails.
Example 14. Want statement (External correspondence)

From: Lucas  
Subject: (Company) service order  

Dear Malcolm  
Please find as agreed attached the full set of documents related to the service order. For reference we have also included appendix G to the pre study describing the reports included. Following our discussions during the afternoon and early evening we recognize we need to do some minor updates in appendix 1, these updates will be done over the weekend, most probably already Saturday. This will give you enough time to make final review of the documents Monday July 8th.

For the sake of correctness, I would appreciate you mail confirmation you have received documents today. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at any time feasible for you.

Best Regards

Example 15. Query preparatory (Internal correspondence)

From: Lucas  
Subject: Extension of deadline for provision of project plan  

Hi Anne,  
See mail from Malcolm below, as you can see he insist on having the extra day also in this extension even if we have agreed to target for being ready this Thursday (tried to convince him). Can you assist me in adding that line notification date should then be July 8th 17:00 CET.

Thanks  
/Lucas

Example 16. Query preparatory (Internal correspondence)

From: Jenny  
Subject: (Company) Schedule 4B  

Hi  
We need to close Schedule 4B today, so we could decide upon how to put the Service Credits in connection with the committed service levels. […]  
 […]  
Posting a transaction file – Delivery Time: Lucas/Michael, could you explain the change in the committed service level? Transaction file received before 15:00 will be loaded and the information will be available in the Service before end-of-day. This was written in the same way as other incoming files, so suggest no changes in this.

J
Example 14 presents a want statement, which is the second most direct strategy. The aim is to make the receiver confirm secure arrival of the e-mail, and that he has read it. Although the sequence is introduced fairly indirect, it is a direct request of a certain act. Examples 15 and 16 above on the other hand, represent the conventionally indirect strategy, query preparatory. They both include the verb can (could), which stresses the fact that it is yet a question, rather than a demand, i.e. indicating that it is less direct.

E-mails have previously been said to be an informal means of communication, in comparison to business letters, most probably because the norms of e-mails have not yet been settled to the same extent as they have for business letters (Campbell, 1998). It is important to study formality and directness, and the greetings, closings and requests were analysed to see how their use contributed to the aspects of formality and directness within business e-mails. They all proved to be relevant to some extent.

5. Discussion

It is clear from the current analysis that politeness is an important element in the e-mails investigated, which provides further support for the previous studies on e-mail communication (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1987; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005; Waldvogel, 2007). Along with e-mail correspondence becoming the most used means of communication at the workplace, politeness has equally become an important component to maintain a good relationship between colleagues and partners. By applying politeness into the e-mail correspondence, the users are now able to contribute to the shaping of the workplace atmosphere as being friendly, or less friendly. The present study has separated internal correspondence from external, to be able to identify a potential difference in the approach, depending on the receiver. The results showed very little difference between internal and external correspondence for opening/closing sequences (formality) and requests (directness). In accordance with politeness theory, it would naturally be expected for the external correspondence to lean towards being predominantly indirect and formal, due to it being a correspondence with a customer, when comparing to the internal correspondence; however, this was not true for the current data.

5.1 Greetings

The results present no occurrences of formal greetings (0/46), and among the informal greetings, 7/46 contained no greeting. As greetings are used to introduce communication, they could be seen as not having an effect if they are used repetitively in a chain of correspondence. Therefore, using greetings in short replies, such as adding one before “Sorry, but a power demo is not sufficient in this case” as in Example 1, would appear inappropriate and rather standardised (Waldvogel, 2007). An e-mail lacking a greeting sequence is therefore not necessarily impolite or informal, but is rather straight to the point within the genre (Crystal, 2001). Examples 1, 2 and 3 (section 4.1) all lack greetings, whereof only Example 2 includes a message that somewhat could be interpreted and analysed as being impolite, because the message
partly implies that something has gone wrong or that something has been misinterpreted: “As this obviously needs to be clarified […]”. For this reason, the message can be interpreted as an FTA, and therefore it also correlates with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) work which presented it as being inevitable to avoid FTAs at all times (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Examples 1 and 3 also lack greetings, but they are, in contrast to Example 2, avoiding FTAs. Example 1, “Sorry, but a power demo is not sufficient in this case”, presents a neglecting and straightforward message, which could be analysed to be face threatening. However, the message is introduced by “sorry”, which indicates awareness of politeness and FTAs; and therefore it appears as if the writer aims to avoid an FTA by using “sorry” to soften the impact (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Brown & Levinson, 1987). Example 3 is an introductory message that simply is summarising the agenda from a meeting the same day, “Summary of today’s meeting between […]” and although the greeting sequence is excluded, neither Example 1, nor 3 is perceived as impolite or rude (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Félix-Brasdefer, 2012).

As neither the internal nor external correspondence consisted of formal greetings, it can be stated that the messages have a similar distribution of greeting sequences and accordingly, there seems to be only little difference in the dataset between messages sent internally and those sent externally. However, the external correspondence, in contrast to the internal, was expected to have a higher level of formality due to the customer-seller relationship that traditionally would be assumed to require a more formal approach than internal correspondence traditionally do. A potential reason for such little difference between internal and external communication could possibly depend on the fact that the two participants in the external correspondence have worked together for about 3.5 years, whereas the participants in the internal communication only have worked together between 6 months and 3 years. This means that the participants in the external communication have had a business relationship for a longer period than the internal participants, which could be a valid explanation for their informal relationship through greetings. Based on these results, it could also be suggested that, within this community of practice, it is common knowledge to use informal greetings in e-mail correspondence, regardless of who the receiver is.

5.2 Closings

The closing sequences are, in contrast to greetings, mainly formal sequences that in this dataset solely include variations of ‘best regards’. At several occasions, the authors wrote, in addition to ‘best regards’, the Norwegian or Swedish equivalent for the farewell formula, such as ‘Med vennlig hilsen’ (see Example 6, section 4.2 above). In accordance with previous research this may be due to the aim of stressing togetherness. However, this is only true for Norwegian and Swedish. Finnish was never used to sign off an e-mail, which may be because Finnish is fairly different from the other Scandinavian languages, and then it might be that togetherness is indicated in other ways. This result is also found in Louhiala-Salminen (2002). The closing sequences were mainly formal, as they were expected to. It should be noted, that although the greeting sequences are informal, it does not mean that the message is impolite, because, in the written discourse of e-mail communication, it is common with informal greetings, followed by formal closings (Bjørge, 2007).
Additionally, it should also be noted that the distribution of greetings and closings may not only be analysed from the perspective of internal and external communication, but it should also be taken into consideration that the participants often use greetings and closings individually, rather than depending on the receiver. For example, the participant Lucas used a closing sequence at 17 occasions, whereof 15 included ‘best regards’. In conclusion to this, both greetings and closings are possibly personalised, and not necessarily dependent on the receiver, as first thought.

5.3 Requests

In the analysis of request sequences, it is established that there are basically no differences between internal and external correspondence, as both resulted in being predominantly direct requests (54 % internal and 57 % external). However, for the internal communication, the most indirect form follows the direct strategies, mild hints, which points out they are partly differentiating from each other. In the external correspondence, on the other hand, the direct strategies are followed by a conventionally indirect strategy, query preparatory. The strategy that is most closely related to politeness is the indirect strategy, mild hints (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007), a strategy that is only represented in the internal correspondence (4/13), whereas there were no occurrences in the external, possibly indicating that the internal correspondence in this dataset is more polite. The fact that the external correspondence did not include any instances of mild hints as expected, may also indicate that the long relationship between the internal Lucas and external Malcolm is not too polite by using the most indirect strategy, but they rather show each other respect. In accordance with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, it could be expected that the external correspondence predominantly would contain indirect strategies, but in contrast, they did not occur at all. Furthermore, the total number of instances of requests is almost twice the amount as for the external correspondence (internal 13 occurrences, external 7 occurrences), but there are still too few instances in the present study to draw any substantial conclusions. It can, however, be seen as an indication that the aim is to avoid requests externally, due to that they are FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and that they would threaten the relationship towards the customer. Additionally, it appears as if the writers want to make sure to add a polite face saving sequence when making more direct requests, such as “please” or “I would appreciate…” which are followed by a request. These results could be analysed to suggest that the participants are being aware and that they acknowledge politeness. However, the correspondences still includes mainly direct requests and have been analysed as such.

6. Conclusion

The present study investigated politeness strategies in BELF e-mail communication, and to what extent the level of formality and directness is changed depending on who the receiver is (internal or external contact). The results showed that the level of politeness in greetings, closings and requests was mainly equally distributed to be informal, formal and direct, in both the internal and external correspondence. It can therefore be
suggested, with some degree of certainty, that the level of politeness in terms of formal\textit{ility} and \textit{directness} does not necessarily depend on if the receiver is an internal or external contact but rather on the sender. The results indicate that the sender uses more or less the same strategies to show politeness, and avoid FTAs.

In conclusion, it can be stated that there was only few instances that differed between internal and external correspondence when analysing the politeness strategies \textit{directness} and \textit{formality}. The employees within this company are not more likely to choose formal \textit{greetings} and \textit{closings} when communicating externally, instead, the distribution was fairly equal. The \textit{requests} are, both internally and externally, mainly formulated in accordance with direct strategies, which would indicate that the chosen strategies rather depend on the sender, than the receiver. As before mentioned, previous research suggested that polite e-mail correspondence, in accordance with the politeness theory, preferably would contain formal \textit{openings} and \textit{closings}, and indirect \textit{requests}. This would imply that the current correspondences are not being very polite; however, only one sequence in the e-mails was considered to contain an FTA, which would mean the opposite, the e-mails do not lack politeness. These results would furthermore agree with previous research, and the fact that the conditions and requirements for politeness are currently changing. This indicates that what is polite and impolite in e-mail correspondence today, may not be the same in a few years from now, providing valid reasons for these e-mails not being impolite. The requirements for politeness in e-mail correspondence are yet under development, and therefore, further research on the topic is still needed.
Notes

1. *Hi* includes *Hi + name, Hi all, First name only and Gents.*

2. *Best regards* includes following variants: *Best regards + first name, Best regards + first and surname, Br*, the Norwegian *Med vennlig hilsen/Vennlig hilsen* (‘with friendly greeting’), and the Swedish *Med vänliga hälsningar* (‘with friendly greeting’). The Norwegian and Swedish instances are accounted for when used in e-mails written in English; and they are used by NNS to put a personal touch to it or to make it more informal (Bjørge, 2007)

3. *Name* includes initial letter of first name


Kankaanranta, A. (2005). "Hej Seppo, Could you pls comment on this!": Internal e-mail communication in lingua franca English in a multinational company.


Appendix A

Using English as a lingua franca in business settings

Informed consent note

I have been informed by Sara Lindgren of the overall aims of the research project on using English as a lingua franca on the workplace. I understand that the data (e-mails) will be used interpretively in publications and other research outlets by the researcher or any other researcher with whom she might need to collaborate in the future. The data will be anonymized so that no part of it can be traced to any individual or the company. I have been guaranteed complete confidentiality and anonymity by the researcher, and I have been given the right to see any paper prior to its publication. I have also been given the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Signature

Date

……………………………

……………………………
Appendix B

Example e-mails (internal)

[1] From: Lucas
To: Sam

Hi Sam
I called you yesterday to discuss this case. Please give me a call when you are available, need your support to find a person who can assist in doing the presentation for us. Karin initially responded she could assist but I understand she is very busy and have limited of time. The potential in this customer is fairly big and we think we can handle it in a way supporting our delivery capabilities in 2014.

Best Regards

[2] From: Sam
To: Lucas

Hi,
Sorry that I didn’t call you yesterday because I asked Helen to check can Jenny do the presentation. The problem seems to be that no-one wants to give relatively trivial demo for customer. Karin in currently real heavily involved in other cases and we need to find someone else for the task.

I will have XXX training in the end of the month and can give the presentation if no other resources are not available.

What is the exact date – could it be in first week of February?

Br,
Sam
Appendix C

Example e-mails (external)
[1] From: Malcolm
To: Lucas

Dear Lucas!
I can confirm the receipt of the documents, and that we will accept the final documents to be provided tomorrow morning.

Med vennlig hilsen / best regards
Malcolm

To: Malcolm

Dear Malcolm
Please find as agreed attached the full set of documents related to the service order. For reference we have also included appendix G to the pre study describing the reports included.
Following our discussions during the afternoon and early evening we recognize we need to do some minor updates in appendix 1, these updates will be done over the weekend, most probably already Saturday. This will give you enough time to make final review of the documents Monday July 8th.

For the sake of correctness, I would appreciate your mail confirmation you have receiver the attached documents today.

Should you have any questions, do to hesitate to contact me at any time feasible for you.

Best Regards